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DC COMICS™

THE NEW 52!

7

NIGHTWING®

SAIKO'S LAST ACT...

HIGGINS
BARROWS
BORGES
SIQUEIRA
FERREIRA

RATED T TEEN

...THE DEATH OF DICK GRAYSON!

MAY 2012

DCCOMICS.COM

GOTHAM CITY. THEN.
My father used to say that every show had a "turning point."
A single moment that would define the direction of the night.
A moment that, depending on what happened, would make or break the show.
Life works the same way.
Filled with turning points and crossroads.
Filled with moments that will destroy you...

...or define you.
GOTHAM CITY. NOW.
A MEMORIAL SHOW FOR THE FLYING GRAYSONS.
THIS IS WHERE IT ENDS, "HERO."
BACK WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.
Raymond...my friend...or at least, he used to be.
Now he's calling himself Saiko and I don't know what he is.
The fire is chemical based--the sprinklers are only making it worse.
And Raymond's overridden the stadium controls, trapping thousands of people in here with it.
Come on, Dick--you're supposed to be an improviser.
Start acting like it.

I LIKED YOUR LITTLE SPEECH EARLIER, DICK...ABOUT CONFRONTING THE THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH.
OF COURSE, THAT'S WHAT THIS IS *ALL* ABOUT, ISN'T IT?
I MEAN, IF YOU'D *STAYED* WITH HALY'S CIRCUS IN THE FIRST PLACE...
...*NONE* OF THIS WOULD BE HAPPENING.
ARHH!
I DON'T... KNOW *WHAT* EXACTLY YOU BLAME ME FOR, RAYMOND...
FOR *LEAVING*, DICK...FOR LETTING THEM *RUIN* ME.
THE NIGHT I "DROWNED--"

"--I WASN'T EVEN *IN* THE CAR WHEN IT HIT THE RIVER.
"*OLD MAN HALY* STAGED THE WHOLE THING.
NOOO!
"FOR *MONTHS* HIS MEN KEPT ME ISOLATED, MY LIFE CONFINED TO DARKNESS... SURROUNDED BY DAGGERS AND CLAWS.
"NOTHING BUT PAIN AND HOPELESSNESS...UNTIL THE DAY I *BROKE.*
"UNTIL THE DAY I COULDN'T FEEL ANYTHING AT *ALL.*
"I BECAME *THEIRS*... JUST ANOTHER IN A LONG LINE OF KIDS THAT WERE *RUINED.*
"RUINED WHEN OUR RINGMASTER TOOK *ME.*"

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE CIRCUS *REALLY* IS, DICK.
A PLACE THAT DESTROYS CHILDREN...TURNS THEM INTO *KILLERS*. EXCEPT...
...THEY DIDN'T THINK I WAS *GOOD* ENOUGH.
SO THEY LEFT ME IN A FOREST TO DIE, WITH BIRDS CLAWING AT MY EYES.
BUT YOU'RE DICK GRAYSON--*NIGHTWING*, A "*HERO*."
AND YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING *ABOUT* THAT, WOULD YOU?
RAYMOND, I HAVE NO IDEA *WHAT* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT--
BUT WHAT I *DO* KNOW--
--IS THAT KILLING ALL THESE PEOPLE ISN'T GOING TO HELP *ANYTHING*.
AGH!

WE'RE ABOUT A HUNDRED POUNDS OF MAGNESIUM TOO LATE FOR *THAT* CONVERSATION, *NIGHTWING.*
AT THIS POINT YOU'D HAVE BETTER LUCK PUTTING OUT AN *OIL* BLAZE.
IS THAT *SOP?*
Magnesium fires burn at six-hundred-fifty degrees Fahrenheit and can't be extinguished by fire or water.
PTNK
The best way to put one out is to smother it in sand.
WHAT--
PTNK
HANG ON!
The kind of sand you'd find in the catacombs that a lot of Gotham--including this stadium--is ***built*** *on.*
Which is where a free-falling one-hundred-ton scoreboard comes in play.

KA-THOOOOM

POOM
WELL, WELL, WELL--WHAT A *CLEVER* LITTLE "HERO" WE'VE BECOME.
BUT KNOCKING THE FIRE INTO THE CATACOMBS DOESN'T CHANGE HOW THIS IS ALL GOING TO *END.*
SCHWT
NO!

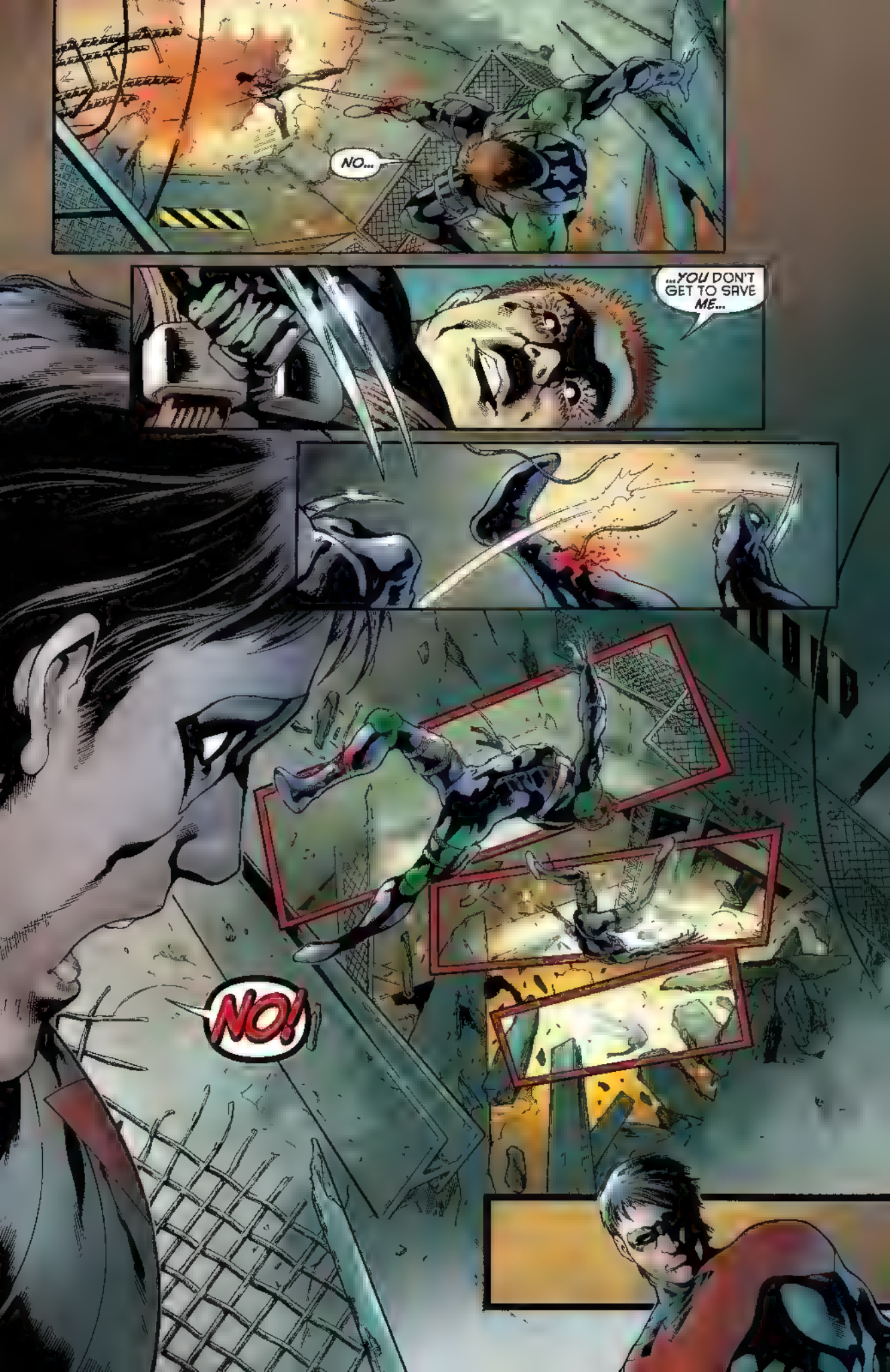
=COUGH=
=COUGH=
EXIT
IT WASN'T =COUGH= SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS, RAYA! HE SAID IT WAS JUST =COUGH= SUPPOSED TO BE GRAYSON!
THIS--THIS IS =COUGH= GOING TO KILL US ALL!
HNNNNN!
HN... HNN...
A VALIANT EFFORT, DICK... TRULY.
YOU MANAGED TO SWAP DEATH BY FLAMES FOR DEATH BY ASPHYXIATION. I'M SURE THE MASSES ARE GRATEFUL.
ARGH!

DAMN IT, RAYMOND-- THOSE PEOPLE ARE YOUR FRIENDS!
FRIENDS? YOU MEAN LIKE BRYAN HALY? OR RAYA?
COME ON NOW, DICK...TELL ME YOU AT LEAST SAW THAT ONE COMING.
THE WHISPERS INTO OLD MAN HALY'S EAR TO GIVE YOU THE CIRCUS... THE WHISPERS INTO YOURS TO TAKE IT...
WHAT...?
RAYA AND I ARE IN THIS TOGETHER, DICK...
"...WILLING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES FOR THIS TO FINALLY END."
-COUGH- -COUGH- -COUGH-

=>COUGH<=
=>COUGH<=
HELP... ME...
NOT LIKE THIS, RAYMOND.
DEET
EXIT
WHAT?! WHAT IS SHE--
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT HER PEGGED *WRONG*, RAYMOND.
BUT NO SURPRISE THERE...

...YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF THINGS WRONG.
KRAAK KRAAK
ARGH!
WHEN IT COMES RIGHT DOWN TO IT, YOU'RE NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OF THE OTHER CRAZIES IN THIS CITY—VICTIM COMPLEX AND EVERYTHING.
ALWAYS LOOKING TO BLAME SOMEONE ELSE FOR YOUR ACTIONS.
UHN!
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M TIRED OF IT. YOU THINK ALL THIS TERRIBLE STUFF HAPPENED TO YOU BECAUSE I LEFT HALY'S? FINE... BELIEVE THAT.
BUT WE BOTH KNOW IT'S NOT TRUE.
EXCEPT... YOU'RE FORGETTING WHOSE NAME WAS IN THEIR SELECTION BOOK.
THAT'S RIGHT, DICK-- THEY DIDN'T WANT ME...THEY WANTED YOU.
UNTIL THE NIGHT YOUR PARENTS DIED AND YOU RAN AWAY WITH A BILLIONAIRE.
UNTIL THE NIGHT THEY CAME FOR ME INSTEAD!

YOU WERE RIGHT *EARLIER*, RAYMOND--
--THIS *DOES* END RIGHT HERE.
BUT NOT THE WAY *YOU* WANT.
POOM
ARH!


NO...
...YOU DON'T GET TO SAVE ME...
NO!

By the time I change and make it outside, the police and firefighters have already found Raymond's body in the catacombs.
I tell them I was caught on the wrong side when the scoreboard fell...That I was trapped.
I answer whatever questions they ask, but they don't seem to have a lot for me.
I wish I felt the same way.
THEY SAID YOU CONFESSED, RAYA...THAT YOU WERE WORKING WITH RAYMOND TO DO ALL TH.S...?
HELP ME UNDERSTAND... PLEASE. I NEED YOU TO HELP ME UNDERSTAND WHY?

WAYNE MANOR
It's not long after that I get the call from Alfred.
Bruce is back after weeks of tracking the Court of Owls.
He said Bruce told him he wants privacy...but Alfred's worried about him.
One look at him and I can see why.
BRUCE?
GEEZ, BRUCE. WHAT DID THEY...DO TO YOU?
IS HE... DEAD?
YES... AND NO.
THE MAN ON THE TABLE IS THE TALON. AN ASSASSIN FOR THE COURT OF OWLS.
Bruce starts walking through the science of how it's possible—tissues being reanimated... an alloy capable of reactivating dead tissue.
I'm so caught up with everything that happened earlier that I'm only partially listening.
Until...
HIS NAME IS COBB. WILLIAM COBB.
AND HE'S YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER.

MY...MY WHAT?
I TOOK A TISSUE SAMPLE, DICK.
AND WHAT, YOU WEREN'T GOING TO TELL ME? THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED PRIVACY?
THAT'S ONE PART OF IT, YES.
AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL ME THE OTHER PART.
HEH, OF COURSE YOU'RE NOT.
YOU KNOW, BRUCE, I GET THAT YOU THINK YOU'RE PROTECTING ME BY KEEPING YOUR SECRETS.
OR RATHER, I GET THAT YOU WANT TO THINK THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP SECRETS LIKE THIS.
BUT SINCE WE'RE BEING SO HONEST AND UPFRONT--RIGHT? LET'S ADMIT THAT BOTH OF US KNOW THE PERSON YOU'RE REALLY PROTECTING IS YOURSELF.
FROM NEEDING TO HAVE A DAMN HUMAN EMOTION!
BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH THESE LAST FEW WEEKS! NO IDEA! THE THINGS I'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH!
AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, BRUCE, IF YOU THINK LEARNING MY ANCESTOR, SOME GUY I NEVER EVEN KNEW, WAS A CRIMINAL--
--IF YOU THINK THAT'S GOING TO FAZE ME, THEN FRANKLY, YOU DON'T KNOW ME AT--

KRACK
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ONE, TOO, DICK.
I...I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A... TALON?
EVERY DECADE, HALY'S CIRCUS PRESENTED A CROP OF CHILD ATHLETES TO THE COURT, AND THE MEMBERS CHOSE ONE IN SECRET TO BE TRAINED AS THAT ERA'S TALON.
YOU WERE MEANT TO BE THE MOST RECENT ONE. BUT WHEN YOUR PARENTS DIED...
AND YOU TOOK ME IN...
YOU ASKED ME BEFORE, WHAT THE COURT DID TO ME.
WHAT THEY DID WAS SHOW ME THE TRUTH. THAT THE GOTHAM CITY I THOUGHT I KNEW, MY CITY...DOESN'T EXIST.
WELL, HERE'S SOME TRUTH FOR YOU.
YOU MIGHT BE SEEING SIDES ALREADY, ALL OF US BIRDS ON ONE AND YOU, THE BAT, ON THE OTHER. HELL, YOU'RE PROBABLY THROWING UP WALLS RIGHT AND LEFT.
BUT THE FACT IS, I DON'T CARE WHO MY ANCESTOR WAS. OR WHAT THE COURT OF OWLS WANTED ME TO BE. I DON'T. WE ARE WHO WE CHOOSE TO BE, BRUCE. NOT THE ROLE THE PAST SAYS WE SHOULD PLAY.

"THE COURT OF OWLS IS JUST ANOTHER BAD GUY, BRUCE. THEY'RE A LITTLE GRAYER AROUND THE TEMPLES IS ALL.
"YES, YOU MADE A MISTAKE AND UNDERESTIMATED THEM...
"...BUT THEY'RE NOT GOTHAM CITY, BRUCE.
"AND NEITHER ARE YOU."
The Book of Names... a list of every Talon Haly's has ever produced.
Except one.
Richard Grayson
I suppose it's fitting that it all comes back to Gotham City.
The place that takes the things you love and twists them against you.
The place that takes your greatest strengths and tries to use them to break you.
I used to think my past was my greatest strength, tragedy and all, because it's what defined me.
But I realize now that's not true-- not exactly.
MASTER RICHARD...THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE YOU NEED TO SEE.
WHAT IS IT, ALFRED?
We're not defined by our tragedies or our turning points.
THIS JUST HIT THE WIRES. I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PRINTING IT OUT FOR YOU.
CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM COMMISSIONER GORDON...

We're defined by how we choose to react to being challenged.
OF COURSE IT DOES, ALFRED...
And in a place like Gotham, the only thing you can really count on...
...is that there will always be something to challenge you.
...OF COURSE IT DOES.
We're defined by the choices we make in the face of them.
IT LOOKS TO BE A DOUBLE MURDER, FEATURING ONE OF YOUR ESCRIMA STICKS.
TURNING POINTS
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DEATH STROKE
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